

NUTRITION

Frequently Asked Questions: Nutrition and Diabetes

1. Why do I need to see a dietitian?

Registered dietitians (RDs) have training and expertise in how the body uses food. RDs who understand diabetes can teach you how the food you eat changes your blood glucose level and how to coordinate your diabetes medications and eating. Do you know how many calories you should eat each day? How to cut down on the fat in your meals? How to make eating time more interesting? An RD can help you learn the answers to these, and lots of other questions. Your dietitian will work with you to create a healthy eating plan that includes your favorite foods.

2. Why does losing weight help my diabetes?

Weight loss helps people with diabetes in two important ways. First, it lowers insulin resistance. This allows your natural insulin (in people with type 2 diabetes) to do a better job lowering blood glucose levels. If you take insulin or a sulfonylurea medication, losing weight may allow you to quit taking it. Second, it improves blood fat and blood pressure levels. People with diabetes are about twice as likely to get cardiovascular disease as most people. Lowering blood fats and blood pressure is a way to reduce that risk.

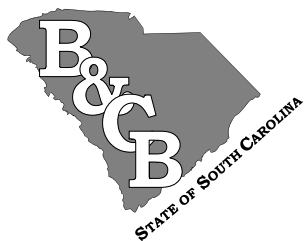
3. Can I eat foods with sugar in them?

For almost every person with diabetes, the answer is yes! Eating a piece of cake made with sugar will raise your blood glucose level. So, will eating corn on the cob, a tomato sandwich, or lima beans. People with diabetes can and do eat sugar. In your body, it becomes glucose, but so do the other foods mentioned above. With sugary foods, the rule is moderation. Eat too much, and

- 1) You'll send your blood glucose level up higher than you expected;
- 2) You'll fill up but without the nutrients that come with vegetables and grains; and
- 3) You will gain weight.

So, do not pass up a slice of birthday cake. Instead, at the next meal, eat a little less bread or potato and be sure to take a brisk walk to burn some calories.

Source: The American Diabetes Association



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